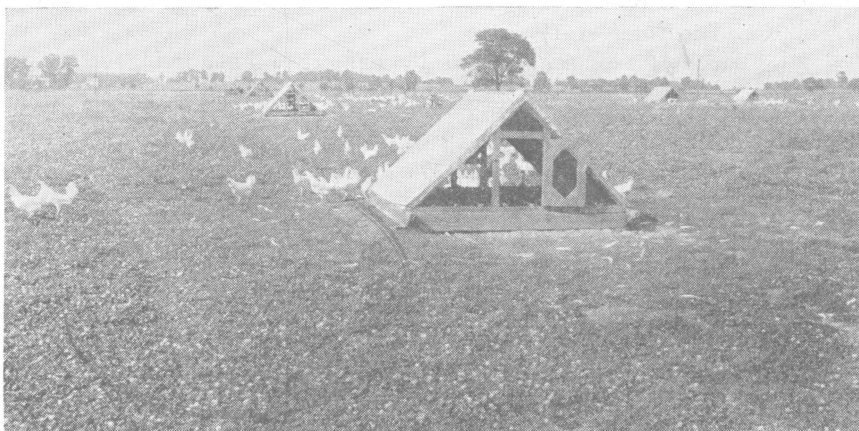


PASTURES FOR POULTRY

A Home-Grown Vitamin Program for Ohio Poultrymen

By Poultry and Agronomy Specialists

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It takes less feed for pullets when they are on good ladino pasture.

Pastures Save Feed and Money for Poultrymen

Growing pullets and breeding hens should receive the best feed available, which should include good pasture. There is no doubt that a good pasture program saves feed and money for Ohio poultrymen. Green feed and sunshine provide vitamins A, G, and D in abundance. Dried clippings from good pastures yield from 20 to 24 percent protein. Interest in poultry pastures has increased since ladino clover came into the picture. Its vine-like growth adds durability.

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Pastures replace expensive vitamin-rich ingredients in the mash, such as dried milk and other riboflavin-rich materials, alfalfa leaf meal, dried cereal grasses, and Vitamin A feeding oils. Birds on good pasture consume less mash, because of the proteins and vitamins secured from the pasture. Cannibalism is not a problem on a well managed pasture.

A program of pastures for poultry must (1) provide succulent green feed for the entire season; (2) permit the growing flock complete isolation from old hens; and (3) stand wear and heavy grazing.

Perennial Pastures

Ladino Clover for Poultry Pasture.—Ladino clover may be grown either alone or in mixtures for poultry pasture, but many poultrymen prefer it alone. Seeding rates per acre are:

Ladino clover— $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

or

Ladino clover— 1 – $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Timothy—2 lbs. per acre seeded in summer (4 lbs. in spring)

Ladino seed requires the same inoculant as red, mammoth, alsike, and white clovers.

Meadow Pastures on Crop Land.—On soils suitable for growing alfalfa, the following mixture is recommended per acre:

Ladino clover— $\frac{1}{2}$ – 1 lb.

Alfalfa—6 lbs.

Red clover—4 lbs.

Timothy*—3 lbs. in fall or 6 lbs. in spring.

On soils not ready for alfalfa, the following mixture per acre is suggested:

Ladino clover— $\frac{1}{2}$ – 1 lb.

Red clover—6 lbs.

Alsike clover—2 lbs.

Timothy*—3 lbs. in fall or 6 lbs. in spring.

Bluegrass and White Clover Pastures.—Bluegrass and white clover sods, limed and fertilized and pastured or clipped to keep them tender and succulent, make good spring and fall pasture. They cannot be depended on in midsummer nor during drouth periods in other seasons.

Fields should be limed as needed before seeding, and 400 to 500 pounds per acre of 0-12-12, 3-12-12 or 4-12-8 applied on the grain crop or at the time of making the seeding. Later apply 1 ton of agricultural ground limestone or equivalent per acre every 5 or 6 years and 300 to 400 pounds of 0-12-12 each year.

Annual or Temporary Pastures

Annual or temporary pastures may be regarded as emergency measures until perennial pastures are established.

For early spring use, wheat or rye, seeded in the fall at the rate of 3 to 4

* Bromegrass may be used to replace part or all of the timothy where the sod is to be held for 2 or more years. Sow from 6 to 8 pounds per acre in spring or summer.

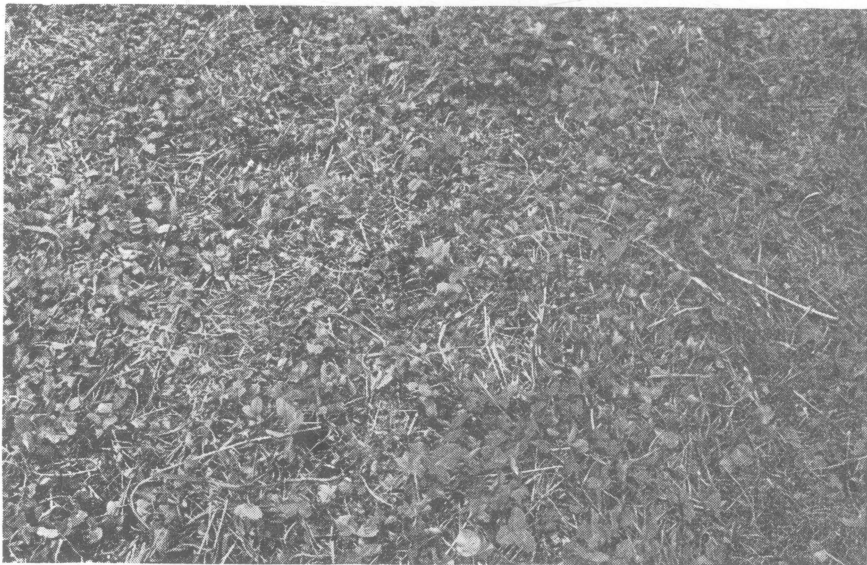
bushels per acre is suggested. These pastures should be eaten off or clipped for best results. Perennial ryegrass, 20 pounds per acre, seeded in late summer or early fall, will produce an abundance of pasture early the next spring.

For late spring and early summer pasture, oats, oats and rape, and rye-grass and ladino clover are recommended. Two seedings of oats, 10 days apart, 4 bushels per acre broadcast or drilled both ways should produce excellent pasture. On rich soils, 3 bushels of oats and 5 pounds of rape seed are suggested. Do not allow a laying flock to pasture on rape. It may discolor egg yolks, but it is an excellent pasture for growing birds.

For midsummer pasture, probably the best is Sudan grass, sown from May 15 in southern Ohio to June 10 in northern Ohio at the rate of from 60 to 90 pounds per acre. Turkey producers especially like the heavier seedings. The grass will not be as coarse and will be more palatable to the chickens and turkeys. It should be clipped as high as the mowing machine can be adjusted.

Feeding on Good Pasture

To get the maximum benefit from pastures, the feeding program must encourage the birds to make the best use of the green feed. Limited feeding of mash encourages pasture consumption. One Ohio poultryman calculated that an average of 330 pullets ate 2,266 pounds of dry matter per acre on a ladino range. The average analysis of this clover on a dry matter basis was 22 percent protein.



Recently clipped ladino pasture. Note the heavy covering on the ground.

Mixtures for Restricted Feeding on Good Pasture

Feed	Pounds of Feed for a Protein Content of	
	12%	18%
Whole corn or wheat	60	..
Whole oats	10	..
Ground corn (coarse)	15	45
Middlings or ground wheat	20
Wheat bran	5	10
Meat scrap	3	8
Soy bean oil meal	4	14
Salt	1	1
Limestone	1	2
Grit	1	..

The 12 percent mash and grain mixture developed at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station gave excellent results when fed once a day in the evening in amounts large enough to last only until noon the next day.

The 18 percent mash is fed in the morning in amounts large enough to last until noon. Feeders are left empty until evening when a full feed of grain is given.

It is of utmost importance that rations of this type be fed only when the birds have access to tender succulent green pasturage. Complete starting rations must be used until the chicks are old enough to utilize the range growth.

The Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station has grown pullets of good quality and performance in the laying house on ladino clover pasture and free choice of whole corn and a mash made up of ground corn, 90 pounds; bone meal, 6 pounds; oyster shell or limestone grit, 2 pounds; salt, 2 pounds; and granite or gravel grit, 2 pounds.

It is evident from these experiments that a good ladino clover pasture provides all the protein and vitamins necessary for normal growth. It is necessary only to add grain and minerals. While other pasture plants may give equally good results, this fact has not as yet been established experimentally.

Management of Pullets on Pasture

Good ranges will support 300 to 500 growing pullets per acre. On good ladino clover pastures, poultrymen have successfully doubled this size of flock by careful management.

Brooder houses and range shelters need not be moved if the feeders and water fountains are moved daily farther and farther from the shelter. This method largely prevents "bare spots" or "danger areas" appearing around the houses. Ladino clover has proven the most satisfactory pasture plant to maintain a "ground cover" and to add "wearing qualities."